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ABSTRACT

This reference source is intended to assist the school bus driver training instructor in course preparation. Instructional units for program planning each contain pertinent course questions, a summary, and evaluation questions. Unit 1, "Introduction to the School Bus Driver Training Program," focuses on basic course objectives and requirements and on employment certification requirements. Unit 2, "The School Bus Driver," discusses necessary physical, emotional, and character qualities of the driver. Unit 3, "Responsibilities of the School Bus Driver," presents traditional responsibilities and equipment-related responsibilities. Unit 4, "Human Relations," focuses on driver relationships with pupils, parents, and administration. Unit 5, "Emergency Procedures," offers methods for responding to accidents and treatment of injuries. Unit 6, "Traffic Laws, Signs, and Signals," discusses general state practices, including pre-trip inspection and operational procedures. Unit 8, "School Bus Maintenance," stresses conservation procedures such as tire and engine care; also discussed is detection of mechanical deficiencies, bus cleaning, and pre-trip inspection. Unit 9, "Transporting the Handicapped Child," considers the relationship of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act to school transportation policy and practice. Driver responsibilities and types of handicapping conditions are discussed. (CJH)

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IMPROVING SCHOOL BUS DRIVER PERFORMANCE

by

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Professional writings include articles for the National School Bus Report, School Bus Fleet, School Business Affairs, Educational Digest and the Tennessee School Board Bulletin. He authored a college level text, *Pupil Transportation: The Essentials of Program Service* and numerous department of education manuals.

Other professional achievements include chairman and co-chairmanship of the School Bus Body Committee, Eighth National School Bus Standards; the Operations Committee, ninth and tenth National School Bus Standards; and participation as a member of the drafting committee for the National Safety Program Standard #17.

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FOREWORD

This book was written with the school bus driver training instructor in mind. It is not intended as a course of instruction but rather as a reference source to be utilized by the instructor in the preparation of his own course of study. He, alone, knows the extent of his instructional needs, the materials that should be used and the effort that must be put forth to meet them successfully. In essence, it can be stated, without equivocation, that its one all encompassing objective is to provide the instructor with some of the information that is needed to ensure the operation of school buses in a safe, efficient and economical manner.

The book contains a series of suggested instructional units that, hopefully, will provide the instructor with a simplified, systematic approach to program planning. Most of the information is drawn from more than twenty-five years of experience in the field. It is, understandably, supplemented with information gleaned from attendance at dozens of local, state, regional and national level conferences on pupil transportation, from conversations with many of the nation's leading authorities in pupil transportation, from such nationally recognized organizations as the National Safety Council, the American Red Cross, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration and throughout the reading of driver instructional manuals published by numerous state departments of education. Grateful acknowledgement is hereby extended to all that contributed in any way to the preparation of its contents.

Ernest Farmer

To the incomparable J. Pope Baird, a man
that has forgotten more pupil transportation
than most of us will ever know.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM

This unit will focus attention upon the basics in school bus driver training. Course content will deal with course objectives, pertinent rules and regulations and certification requirements for employment purposes. Attendance requirements will be identified and grading procedures will be noted. The unit will also contain a discussion of classroom procedures to be observed and deal with the importance of compliance by those in attendance.

I. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. Why should school bus drivers be required to attend scheduled driver training programs?
2. How often should the training programs be conducted?
3. What are the objectives of a training program?
4. What should be included in the course content?

II. Course Requirements

Most drivers will welcome the opportunity to attend driver training sessions. They are aware of the tremendous responsibilities associated with the task and are anxious to acquire the knowledge that is essential to a successful job performance. They are committed to an observance of those practices that will assure a maximum degree of safety for the transported child and will take advantage of opportunities for improvement that are provided by school officials.

The necessity for compliance cannot be over stressed by school officials. For this reason, considerable emphasis will be placed on the essentiality of compliance with applicable rules and regulations, operational procedures and the other aspects of program service. Care will be taken to familiarize each participant with the importance of his task; each will be informed of what is expected of him throughout the course and how he is to be graded on his progress.

Attendance

Perfect attendance is required. Make-ups of missed classes will be permitted at the discretion of the instructor and as time permits. Late arrivals and early departures are not to be permitted.

Grading procedures

A minimum score of 75% will be required on the written exam as a condition for passing the course.

Certification

A bill-fold size card will be issued to all who successfully complete the driver training course. Failure to meet requirements for certification will not invalidate required driver's license; it will, however, jeopardize the district's allocation for the children transported on his vehicle the following year if the failure is not removed during the school year in which the failure was recorded.

Classroom Procedures

Class members are responsible for bringing supplies to each class session. Smoking, when permitted, will be in accordance with the posted instructions of the host institution. A morning and evening break of fifteen minutes duration will be permitted at the instructor's discretion.

III. Introduction Statement

School bus drivers are special human beings selected from the masses to perform a very special task. They are fallable as human beings, however, and because of this fallability, are likely to make mistakes. Fortunately, most will be of little consequence; others, however, will result in tragedies that will touch the lives of the transported pupil, his parents, the school bus driver and the community in general.

School Board Obligations

Local school boards must assume responsibility for the formulation and adoption of policies to keep accident-producing situations to a minimum and, if at all possible, to eliminate them altogether; consequently, the question is often posed: What actions can be taken to improve school bus driver performance? Unfortunately, there is no one all encompassing, clear cut answer. What is desirable for one may be undesirable for another; what one adjusts to with difficulty may pose no problem at all to the other. One may excel as a driver and yet fail miserably as a disciplinarian; therefore, the school board is confronted with a three-fold challenge: 1) to select the best drivers available, 2) to detect potential problem developing situations, and 3) to quickly correct, or eliminate, such problems before they become realities.

Corrective Procedures

A successful observance of certain administrative-oriented procedures seems imperative if school officials are to provide the quality of service most parents are demanding for their transported children. These procedures are generally concerned with the selection, training and supervision of bus drivers, the handling of severe disciplinary problems, the acquisition of safe and comfortable transportation equipment, and the revision of pupil transportation policies. Each, in its own way, contributes immensely to the success or failure of the program effort.

Selection, Training and Supervisory Procedures

If school officials seem to be grasping for straws in their efforts to improve program service, they can take pride in their accomplishments to date for they are making slow but steady progress. After a century or more of experimenting with all relevant aspects of program service, most, if not all, have concluded that it takes a lot more than a warm body to operate a school bus safely. They have learned too painfully that a successful school bus operation requires the services of a person skilled in the art of handling heavy equipment, blessed with more than his rightful share of patience, and dedicated to the task of discharging his responsibilities in a professional manner.

Selection Procedures

The wise board of education will insist upon the development of a selective screening process, since qualified drivers do not acquire these qualities operating pick-up trucks, passenger cars, farm tractors or even two-ton trucks though such experience is beneficial. They acquire them through training, driving experience, and more training; therefore, school administrators can facilitate the process by being more selective in the employment of driver personnel, more restrictive in excusing such personnel from attending scheduled training sessions, and more responsive to the needs associated with their job performance. Employing the first person that needs the job, excusing him from scheduled training sessions and ignoring his many needs does little to improve his knowledge of the job, his willingness to cooperate with school officials and his contribution to the success of the program effort.

Successful driver applicants should be in good physical condition, be of good character, skilled in the operation of bus-type equipment, and able to communicate with people. They must demonstrate a positive attitude, be of good temperament and always willing to place the welfare of the transported pupil above their own personal consideration. Confessed, or detected, weaknesses in either area should result in the rejection of applicants for employment.

Training Procedures

The instructional program should provide bus drivers with a variety of experiences. The content should emphasize both pre-service and in-service aspects of equipment operation. Pre-service training, including both classroom and behind-the-wheel type instruction, should precede the actual operation of the loaded school bus REGARDLESS of the driver's previous driving experience. This instruction should be followed at regular scheduled intervals with in-service training sessions designed to call specific attention to such critical problem areas as railroad crossings, dangerous intersections, pupil behavior and ambiguities in existing regulations. Both types of training are essential to the attainment of desired competency levels among driver personnel and must be provided on a continuing basis.

IV. Instructional Procedure

The instructor must possess unlimited instructional skills, demonstrate a knowledge of the subject under discussion and be able to utilize a variety of teaching aids if he is to function successfully in a classroom environment. It matters little, for example, if he knows his subject area from A to Z but lacks the communicative skills to impart such knowledge to those in attendance. The same, of course, would be true if he relied exclusively upon the classroom lecture approach. He must be proficient in both.

The good instructor will utilize a variety of methods to get his points across. Charts, depicting rules of the road, are easy to prepare and quite effective in getting and holding the participants attention. Filmstrips are excellent teaching aids and even more effective in disseminating information. Neither is as effective, however, in teaching drivers to become familiar with traffic laws and ordinances as the simple handout that can be retained and used long after the course is completed.

The better instructors will utilize the above instructional methods and supplement them with other instructional innovations. Pre-session stimulators are always acceptable and widely used. The instructor that can challenge can motivate and motivation is perhaps the greatest ingredient in the entire instructional process. He will not hesitate to utilize experts in other agencies to share the instructional load. Such practices bring timely data to class participants from a variety of sources and introduce a welcomed change in instructional methodology.

V. Summary

School bus driver personnel play prominent roles in the success of the pupil transportation program. Their contributions are largely dependent upon their knowledge of the task, their capability to perform in an acceptable manner and the support they receive from their local board of education. They cannot render effective service unless the board is supportive of desirable employment practices, responsive to the need for resolving problem developing situations, and willing to act quickly to institute procedures that are needed to upgrade the quality of program service. Defining program objectives, encouraging self-evaluations and providing motivational incentives are steps in the right direction.

VI. Session Evaluators

(For Oral Discussion Purposes Only)

1. Why are bus drivers referred to as "special human beings?" Give two reasons to support your answer.
2. Explain why some qualified persons can excel as a driver and still fail as a disciplinarian?
3. How does the condition of equipment contribute to the success or failure of the program effort?
4. How does patience on the part of the driver contribute to the success of the pupil transportation program?
5. Why should bus drivers be in good physical condition?
6. Should drivers be employed that must rely upon hearing aids to hear?
7. Why is a positive attitude so important to a good driving performance?
8. Why is pre-service training needed before in-service training?

UNIT 2: THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

UNIT II
THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

I. Introduction

The school bus driver, by virtue of the position he assumes within the framework of the educational program, must be capable, responsible, trustworthy and free of restricting mental or physical disabilities. This unit will deal with driver qualifications, personal characteristics and certification requirements.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. Why is special licensing required of bus driver applicants for employment as school bus drivers?
2. Why is it important to take the driver's test on a school bus rather than in a car?
3. Why is peripheral or field vision so important in the operation of pupil transportation equipment?
4. How is personal hygiene related to satisfactory driving performance?
5. Why is it important that bus drivers love children?

III. Instructional Procedure

The driver training instructor should review the employment practices observed in local school districts with bus drivers in attendance at each training session. Drivers in some sessions will be completing training requirements in order to improve their chances for employment. It is necessary for them to know how to obtain and complete the application form, where to get their required medical examinations, how to arrange for the proper type of driver's license, where to go and who to contact for their initial interviews and how to obtain a copy of the school district's pupil transportation policy.

The experienced driver will have the answers to such questions but he will profit from information on the more critical aspects of the school bus operation. The physical, mental and emotional qualities required of bus drivers, for example, must be covered in detail without regard to the experience of those in attendance. The same is true when character traits and personal hygiene are being discussed and, of course, no session on this unit would be complete without full descriptions of each employment requirement.

Physical Qualities

The health of the school bus driver is as important as any of his motor skills. Vision, for example, is multi-faceted. It refers to 1) visual acuity which is designated in terms of sight capability in either or both eyes within certain correctable tolerances. Twenty-twenty vision in one eye with twenty-forty or better in the other eye corrected with glasses to twenty-thirty in both eyes is acceptable in most states; 2) the field of vision is recognized as that 190° area extending to the left and right of his forward view which must not be less than 140° for employment purposes; 3) color blindness is a disqualifying condition for all bus drivers because of the universal coloring scheme utilized in traffic control devices that are encountered on a day to day basis in all urban and many rural school districts. The driver that cannot distinguish readily discernible differences in reds, greens, ambers and yellows should be rejected for employment for obvious reasons.

The same is true for deficiencies in the driver's night vision. The driver's ability to operate his school bus safely at night is greatly influenced by the effects of darkness and the light glare on his eyes. The bus driver should be informed that good night vision is as important as good day vision because of the effects of glare recovery, dark adaptation and glare resistance on his driving performance. The driver training instructor should fully explain each condition in detail and illustrate the significance of their impact on driver performance.

The importance of depth perception cannot be underestimated. The training instructor must acquaint bus drivers with the difference between sight judgement and distance judgement. He must explain that the former refers to those judgemental decisions relating to the speed and the size of objects, their

shapes and their distance from the vehicle he is operating. The latter, of course, relates to changes in traffic conditions, the passing or overtaking of other vehicles and parking in limited spaces. Both are encountered daily under average routing conditions.

Hearing is vital to the successful job performance. School bus drivers must be able to understand ordinary conversational speech within a specified distance. In most states, this distance is limited to no less than fifteen inches for the whispered voice and twelve inches for the standard pocket watch. Hearing aids are generally acceptable but only on the condition that they are operable and worn at all times. A proven charge of non-compliance is grounds for dismissal in many states.

A deterioration in many drivers is the traditional age-related reduction in reaction time. The conscientious training instructor will stress this physical condition which seems to plague many drivers in the upper age brackets. He will explain that reaction time is that period of time required for drivers to ***recognize*** a hazard, to ***determine*** the type of action to be taken and to ***initiate*** the action required to avoid it. Again, reaction time, like depth perception, requires an early detection by the driver and prompt action to compensate for deficiencies in physical conditioning.

Mental/Emotional Qualities

The instructor must stress the importance of these qualities in school bus drivers. He must call attention to the fact that they are expected to have a positive attitude, a pleasing personality and a better than average level of emotional stability. Calmness under stress, coolness during emergencies and an even temperament are essential to a satisfactory job performance. Alertness, fairness, honesty and patience are other desirable qualities of school bus drivers.

Personal Hygiene

Good grooming is essential to a satisfactory job performance. Children respond more freely, are more cooperative, and are generally more considerate of drivers who are clean shaven, neatly dressed and free of body odor.

Character Traits

School bus drivers must be of impeccable character. They must love children, express themselves clearly and, while on duty, abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and profanity. They must also be able to identify with transported pupils, their parents and school officials and conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

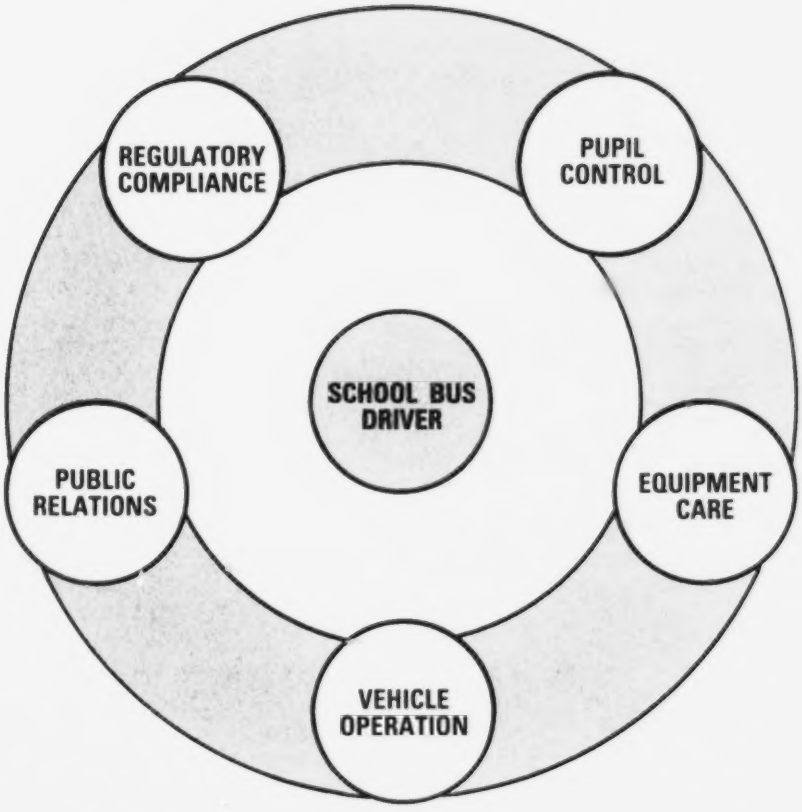
IV. Summary

School bus drivers must be fully qualified to operate pupil transportation equipment. They must also possess good personalities, be of strong character, practice personal cleanliness and be able to communicate with children and members of the general public.

V. Session Evaluators

(check the correct response)

1. Poor eyesight is a physical condition. ___ yes ___ no
2. The field of vision is a motor skill. ___ yes ___ no
3. Color blindness is a disqualifying condition for employment as a bus driver. ___ yes ___ no
4. Night vision is more difficult for most drivers. ___ yes ___ no
5. There is an appreciable difference between sight judgement and distance judgement. ___ yes ___ no
6. Deterioration in reaction time is age-related. ___ yes ___ no
7. Calmness under stress is essential to a good job performance. ___ yes ___ no
8. Children are more cooperative with well-groomed driver. ___ yes ___ no
9. It is acceptable to use tobacco when transporting children. ___ yes ___ no
10. There is a need for drivers to be fair with all children. ___ yes ___ no



UNIT 3: SCHOOL BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

UNIT III
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

I. Introduction

Driver performance contributes significantly to the success or failure of the pupil transportation program. The school bus driver who fails to discharge his duties in an acceptable manner is no more responsible for the resulting deterioration in program service than the school administrator who recognizes these weaknesses but neglects to take the action required to correct them. The school bus driver, therefore, must understand his responsibilities and then be prepared to discharge them in an acceptable manner. A good administrator will explain these responsibilities and then make sure that he does.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. Drivers, parents, pupils and school officials must cooperate with each other. Why is this so important?
2. Why should the driver stay physically fit and mentally alert at all times?
3. What records should be kept by the school bus driver?
4. Why is it important to keep the service (entrance) and emergency doors closed when the bus is in operation?
5. How is the pre-trip inspection related to pupil safety?

II. Instructional Procedures

The school bus driver assumes a wide variety of responsibilities when he accepts employment in this capacity. They range from the traditional duties to the discharge of special driving regulations and the observance of essential driving practices. The training instructor must be aware of these variations and devote the time required to fully familiarize bus drivers in attendance with the full importance of each.

Traditional Responsibilities

The school bus driver is responsible for a professional job performance. He can accomplish this by obeying all state laws and local traffic regulations. He must accept responsibility for the safety of the transported child. He is expected to establish a reasonable standard of conduct for his pupil passengers and effect its enforcement in a fair and impartial manner. He must be cooperative with his pupil passengers, their parents and school officials. He must be consistent in the location of bus stops, adhere to the route schedule in morning pick-ups and evening deliveries, handle on-board disturbances firmly but fairly, and operate his bus safely on a day-to-day basis. He must keep himself physically fit and mentally alert at all times.

Equipment-Related Responsibilities

The school bus driver cannot be all things to all people. He must understand that he can be a great driver and still be a poor mechanic. He might even be an excellent driver and have only limited knowledge in first aid; therefore, he should not be overly reticent about compensating for such weaknesses. He should strive for perfection and be willing to go to any extreme to achieve it.

The training instructor must detect such shortcomings and act to help drivers overcome them. He should secure the services of a paramedic when first aid is being taught; a mechanic when vehicle care is to be discussed and a policeman to lecture on special traffic ordinances. A mechanic, for example, could render a valuable service on vehicle maintenance by discussing the importance of such pre-trip inspection items as tires, brakes, lights, steering, instruments, mirrors, etc. He could stress the consequences of beginning the morning route with tires that have damaged side walls, windshield wipers with frayed edges, a battery with a low water level, lights with lens that are dirty or broken, steering with broken linkage and brakes with leaking cylinder kits. He could conduct a visual inspection that

V. Session Evaluators

(check the correct response)

1. The bus driver's ***greatest*** responsibility is to save the school district money. ___ yes ___ no
2. A school bus driver may be a good driver without being a good mechanic. ___ yes ___ no
3. A paramedic is a fancy name for a traffic officer. ___ yes ___ no
4. The pre-trip inspection is made at least once a week by all drivers. ___ yes ___ no
5. Yield signs are really stop signs that do not require complete stops. ___ yes ___ no
6. Many rear end accidents are caused by improper signals from the bus driver. ___ yes ___ no
7. Large band instruments should be transported if children must use them. ___ yes ___ no
8. Doors may be slightly opened for ventilation during extremely humid weather. ___ yes ___ no
9. Children should never be allowed to stand in the stepwell. ___ yes ___ no
10. Overhead alternately flashing warning lights may be used at railroad crossings. ___ yes ___ no

UNIT 4: HUMAN RELATIONS

UNIT IV
HUMAN RELATIONS

I. Introduction

Education, in one sense of the word, is the process that results from the practice of people working together to meet the challenge of life. Cooperation and communication are essential to any productive group action and for this reason, parents, principals, teachers, pupils, bus drivers and others involved in the educational process must continually strive for a working relationship that is mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. "Discipline does not start on the bus; it starts in the home." Do you agree or disagree?
2. Why is it important that drivers "never" argue with parents?
3. Why should the driver be required to report all serious disciplinary problems to the building principal?
4. How can misbehaving pupils be corrected by the bus driver in a "positive" manner?
5. Why is it important for the bus driver to set a good example for his transported pupils?

III. Instructional Procedure

There are many basic relationships in pupil transportation. Some, however, are more important for school bus drivers than others. The more important are those that evolve from contacts with pupils, parents, school officials and the public in general. The instructor, therefore, should be aware of these relationships and stress each to the fullest during all training sessions.

The Bus Driver-Pupil Relationship

The driver's first responsibility is for the safety of the transported pupil. This requires the assumption of responsibilities that significantly contribute to the success of the program effort. He is a public relations specialist and a teacher on wheels as well as the operator of an expensive piece of equipment. He is, in more ways than one, a roving ambassador for the school district that expects him to perform miracles on a day-to-day basis. He is expected to be punctual without fail; he is required to treat all children equally and friendly without becoming overly familiar; he is instructed to be impartial and firm but not unduly strict. He must be courteous, considerate, cooperative and protective of those entrusted to his care. More importantly, he is expected to perform all tasks cheerfully and still maintain good control of his pupils.

This is easier for some drivers than others. The training instructor must note such differences among participants and be prepared to counter them with appropriate suggestions. A first step, and an extremely important one, is to impart an understanding of corrective procedures utilized in the handling of on-board disturbances. Such action must be handled in a positive manner. Pupils, for example, must never be humiliated. Punishment, obviously, should be delayed until the anger subsides and warnings should never be constructed by pupils as threats from the driver.

The school bus driver must be taught the importance of setting a good example for his pupil passengers. He should never smoke on the bus or use profanity in their presence. He should present a neat appearance, express an interest in their welfare and earn their respect by giving them the same. He should be knowledgeable of school board policies, practice them diligently and require his passengers to do likewise. More importantly, he should discharge his responsibilities as the professional he must become if he is to be successful in this important role within the district.

The Driver-Parent Relationship

Most bus drivers have heard a dozen times or more that discipline has its beginning in the home rather than on the bus and yet most, if not all, will readily admit that they harbor serious doubts about

whether it does or not. This concern on their part exerts a powerful influence on the quality of service provided. The driver, for example, has a right to expect certain things from the parent. He is entitled to their support when disciplinary action is warranted; their cooperation when such is needed and their appreciation when it is justified. He, of course, is expected to earn this respect and can do so by winning parental confidence in his driving ability. An observance of safe driving practices, therefore, is an essential pre-requisite to the attainment of this objective but it is not the only one. He must get to know parents and learn to cooperate with them. He must practice effective pupil control measures and convince parents that he can make them work. He must demonstrate a concern for their children by being on time at approved bus stops and be prepared to discuss any on-board problem involving their children with them as the situation demands.

The Driver-Public Relationship

The school bus driver is many things to his pupils and their parents but none are more important than the image he projects. Whether he improves this image or permits it to deteriorate is entirely up to him. Training instructors seldom miss the opportunity to stress the importance of such image builders as alertness, cleanliness and politeness. They also devote a portion of each session to the importance of being reliable, punctual, practical and professional. The driver is constantly bombarded with a rhetoric that emphasize his responsibility for maintaining discipline on his bus, operating it in accordance with all legislative statutes and local traffic ordinances and exercising care in the operation of his vehicle.

The Driver-Administration Relationship

A near perfect relationship between the bus driver and the administrator is essential to the success of the school bus operation. If the driver is truly the captain of the ship, then the administrator has to be the harbor master and neither can operate efficiently, economically or safely without the other. Cooperation and mutual respect form the cornerstone of their relationship and it is strengthened through the sharing of ideas, the building of respect for one another and the utilizing of the resources of other employees. Drivers, for example, should refrain from criticizing the administrator in the presence of pupils, their parents or other persons in the community. The administrator should support drivers experiencing problems on their buses. They can succeed by working together but they cannot succeed working against one another.

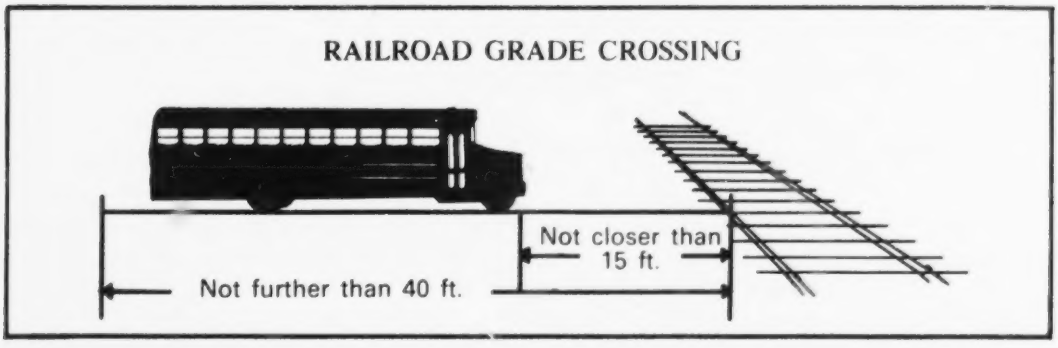
IV. Summary

A good public school program in rural areas and many urban areas is dependent upon a good pupil transportation program. They key to success in pupil transportation is the school bus driver. His contribution is directly related to the human relations aspect of the school bus operation. The manner in which he deals with parents, pupils, school officials and the community in general will determine the overall effectiveness of the public school program.

V. Session Evaluations

(check the correct response)

1. The driver's first responsibility is for the safety of his transported pupils. ___ yes ___ no
2. A driver can not be firm without being overly strict. . ___ yes ___ no
3. The best way to discipline pupils is to humiliate them in the presence of their peers. ___ yes ___ no
4. The driver must always set a good example for his transported pupils. ___ yes ___ no
5. Parents respect drivers that are always on time at the bus stop. ___ yes ___ no
6. The bus driver should be a public relations expert. ___ yes ___ no
7. The better drivers are also good disciplinarians. ___ yes ___ no
8. The bus driver and administrator should respect one another. ___ yes ___ no
9. Driver responsibilities must be discharged in a professional manner. ___ yes ___ no
10. It is all right to threaten pupils as long as you don't carry out the threat. ___ yes ___ no



UNIT 5: EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Pupil injuries must be treated with extreme caution. The more seriously injured should be cared for immediately and kept as warm as possible; the less seriously injured should be provided with emergency treatment and made as comfortable as possible. Neither should be moved until the extent of injury is determined and all should be isolated from the onlookers that are likely to gather at the scene.

Recommended First-Aid Procedures

Drivers must be taught to remain as calm as possible and summon help as quickly as such can be obtained without further endangering their pupil loads. When bandaging is required, care must be taken to cover all open wounds with clean gauze and to secure it with a slip type knot. Wet bandages must not be used under any circumstances.

Incessant bleeding is treated through the application of pressure between the heart and the cut since severed arteries are known to carry blood away from the heart. Training in first-aid should stress the location of the major pressure points in arteries that are located near the bone. They can be found in the neck to the side of the windpipe, the front of the ear against the skull, on the inside of the upper arm midway between the elbow and the shoulder, in the groin at the point where it passes over the pelvic bone, in the face approximately one inch forward from the angle of the jaw and behind the inner ear of the collar bone against the first rib. Pressure applied at any of these points will reduce bleeding beyond the point. Tourniquets should not be used except when such are absolutely essential to the survival of the injured. They can be more harmful than helpful if improperly applied and not loosened at fifteen minute intervals.

The treatment of minor open wounds require little attention other than an observance of basic first-aid practices. Such wounds should not be touched nor cleaned with soap or water. They should be bandaged with sterile gauze to prevent contamination and excessive bleeding. If pressure is needed to control the flow of blood, then the appropriate pressure point should be located and pressure should be applied immediately.

Foreign matter in the eyes will require an exercise of special precautionary measures. The eye(s) for example, should never be rubbed. The eye lid(s) instead should be lifted to permit the tears to wash such objects from their collection points in the corner of the eye(s). The eye(s) should be covered with a compress until the services of a doctor or paramedic can be obtained.

Persons in shock exhibit certain symptoms that are easily recognizable. The pulse will be noticeably weak; the skin coloration will be pale and sometimes moist and nausea is likely to occur. The feet of the injured should be elevated above his chest if there is no difficulty in breathing observed and the injury is not to the head. In either case, he should be kept warm and in a lying position.

Fractures are of two types: simple and compound. Simple fractures are generally accompanied by swelling, tenderness and some degree of pain during forward and lateral movement. Compound fractures, on the other hand, are more severe and require special corrective action. Such fractures involve complete breaks of the bone and require the use of splints to keep the broken ends of the bone immobile.

The training instructor must also provide instruction for bus drivers in the treatment of falls, convulsions, nose bleeds, head injuries, abrasions, simple lacerations and a variety of other injuries experienced in the transportation of school children.

IV. Summary

Emergency conditions will arise from time to time despite every possible effort to prevent them. School officials, therefore, must teach drivers to assume responsibilities and to administer first-aid when it is needed. They must be informed that knowing what to do is equally as important as knowing how to do it. Bus drivers provided with such knowledge and taught how to use it could well be the difference between life and death for the transported child.

V. Session Evaluators

(check the correct response)

1. Administering first-aid to pupils suffering minor injuries is not a driver responsibility. ___ yes ___ no
2. Most accidents can be avoided. ___ yes ___ no
3. School bus accidents are either controllable or non-controllable. ___ yes ___ no
4. Accidents resulting from driver carelessness are controllable. ___ yes ___ no
5. Most accidents resulting from adverse weather conditions are non-controllable. ___ yes ___ no
6. Alertness is often the difference between a ***near*** tragedy and a ***real*** tragedy. ___ yes ___ no
7. Seriously injured children may be moved by the driver after the extent of his injury is determined. ___ yes ___ no
8. A slip-type knot must always be used to secure bandages on an open wound. ___ yes ___ no
9. Wet bandages may be used on certain type wounds. ___ yes ___ no
10. Arteries carry blood away from the heart. ___ yes ___ no
11. Tourniquets are often more harmful than helpful. ___ yes ___ no
12. Minor open wounds may be cleaned with soap and water. ___ yes ___ no
13. The eye may be rubbed to remove foreign matter. ___ yes ___ no
14. The pulse will be noticably weak in pupils experiencing shock. ___ yes ___ no
15. Complete fractures require special corrective action. ___ yes ___ no

TURN LEFT
TURN RIGHT
S CURVE RIGHT
ROAD WITH MANY CURVES CLOSE TOGETHER
BRIDGE NOT WIDE ENOUGH FOR 2 CARS
DO NOT CROSS YELLOW ON RIGHT OF CENTER LINE
ROAD DANGEROUS FOR FAST DRIVING
SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT 15 MILES
PASSING UNLAWFUL. YOU CAN NOT SEE AHEAD
WATCH FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN ON ROAD
R R
RAILROAD CROSSING

UNIT 6: TRAFFIC LAWS, SIGNS AND SIGNALS

UNIT VI
TRAFFIC LAWS, SIGNS AND SIGNALS

I. Introduction

This unit is designed to familiarize the school bus driver with the various traffic laws, signs, signals and traffic regulations which govern the operation of pupil transportation equipment in a safe, sensible and efficient manner.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. Why are the speed limits on country roads lower than on state and federal highways?
2. Why is speeding classified as reckless driving?
3. Why is color an important factor in sign, signal and road markings?

III. Instructional Procedure

Traffic laws are essential to the safety of the transported child. They control the speed of vehicles on rural roadways, city streets and in school zones. They address the type of driving infractions that occur in the operation of transportation equipment, and they serve as a deterrent to those without respect for the rights of others.

The instructor must emphasize the necessity for complying with all control measures. He must stress the importance of drivers setting examples for their pupil passengers but before he can do this, he must know the laws himself. This means that he must understand the laws, be able to recognize road signs and be aware of the many signals he will encounter on a day-to-day basis as he meets with drivers throughout the district.

Traffic Laws

Every state enacts, promulgates and enforces its own traffic laws. They are used to regulate speed limits for all type roadways and city streets. They also control traffic in school zones, hospital zones and residential areas. While they seldom require significant amendments, they are, nevertheless, changed as the need arises. In those instances when changes do become necessary, they are made for one consistent reason: to protect the public from the wanton acts of those that are less concerned.

Penalities are assessed to compliment the seriousness of each type infraction. Training instructors should be knowledgeable of these variations and include a discussion of the more significant ones in their training sessions. Reckless driving, moving violations and speeding, for example, are all different violations that are related to vehicle operation. Each merits a different penalty assessment and rightly so because passing on curves and hills is decidedly more hazardous at any speed than exceeding the posted speed limit by ten or less miles per hour.

The same could be said for many other violations. The failure to yield the right-of-way, running stop signs, crossing railroad tracks without stopping and disregarding warning signals are acts of carelessness that have resulted in tradegies that could have been avoided.

Traffic Signs and Road Markings

Signs are classified into a variety of categories. Regulatory signs are used to inform the public of traffic laws that are applicable to specific portions of given roadways. Warning signs give advance notice of hazardous conditions that are present on such roadways and guide signs are used to designate points of interest and to provide geographical information that is needed by the motoring public.

Signs are of different shapes for identification purposes. Regulatory signs, for example, are generally limited to three basic geometric forms: octagons, rectangles and triangles. The octagon sign is universally recognized as the stop sign and is located at the intersection of city streets and intersecting rural roadways; longer dimension "vertical" rectangle signs are used to identify regulatory signs with the exception of the stop and yield signs. The longer dimension "horizontal" rectangular signs are used to

denote most guide signs. The equilateral triangle shape sign is used to inform highway users of the necessity to yield and the isosceles triangle, or penant shape, warns of no passing zones when its longest axis is in the horizontal position.

The shape of warning signs is limited to yet another series of geometric form combinations: the diamond, the circle and the crossbuck are the more prominent. The diamond warns of road hazards ahead and informs the motorist to use extreme caution; the circle is always used to inform motorists of railroad crossings. The same, of course, is true for the more familiar crossbuck.

Highway signs, except for the crossbuck, are also identified by a unique color system. Warning signs, for example, contain a legend in black superimposed on a yellow background. Regulatory signs, with certain exceptions, contain a black legend on a white background. (The stop sign has a white legend on a red background and the yield sign utilizes a red legend on a red and white background.) The guide signs are found with either white, brown or green backgrounds. Destination, distance and informational signs are to have a black legend on a white background, white legend on a black background or the white legend may be permitted on a green background. (Special distinction designs are limited to those blue background signs informing of rest areas and other type service signs.

Signals

Most signal devices fall into four major classifications: highway traffic, pedestrian traffic, train-approach signal/gates and specialized traffic control devices. The training instructor should devote a major portion of his session to the identification and discussion of these signals. Illustrated passouts would be especially helpful to the driver in attendance after the session has concluded.

Highway traffic signals are either pre-timed or traffic-activated. There are advantages to both. The pre-timed signal is used exclusively to control traffic by requiring stops and starts in accordance with a signal pre-determined time schedule. The traffic-activated signal provides for a variety of signaling operations by means of activated vehicle or pedestrian detectors directly related to traffic demands. Such signals may be semi-traffic-activated (restricted to one or more approaches to the intersection); full traffic-activated (all approaches to the intersection are controlled); or traffic-adjusted (signals are continuously varied because of traffic flow information supplied to a master control computor by sampling detectors at critical flow points in the vicinity).

Pedestrian control signals are very simple and easily installed. They are erected at all major and many minor intersections to provide pedestrians with safe passing to the other side of the street.

Train approach signals and gates are characterized by the presence of flashing lights, a wig-wag arm or an automatic gate. The flashing light signal warns of an approaching train through the use of two horizontal red lights that flash alternately at predetermined intervals. The wig-wag is also used for the same purpose but it consists of a red light mounted in a horizontally swinging disc. The automatic gate is equally as effective and physically more restrictive in that it is positioned across the roadway when activated by an approaching train.

There are certain special traffic signals that are worthy of mention. Flashing beacons are used frequently for warning purposes. They are equipped with red or yellow lens that are illuminated in a series of intermittent flashes. Lane direction control signals are used to control the direction of traffic movement on the individual lanes of a given street or roadway.

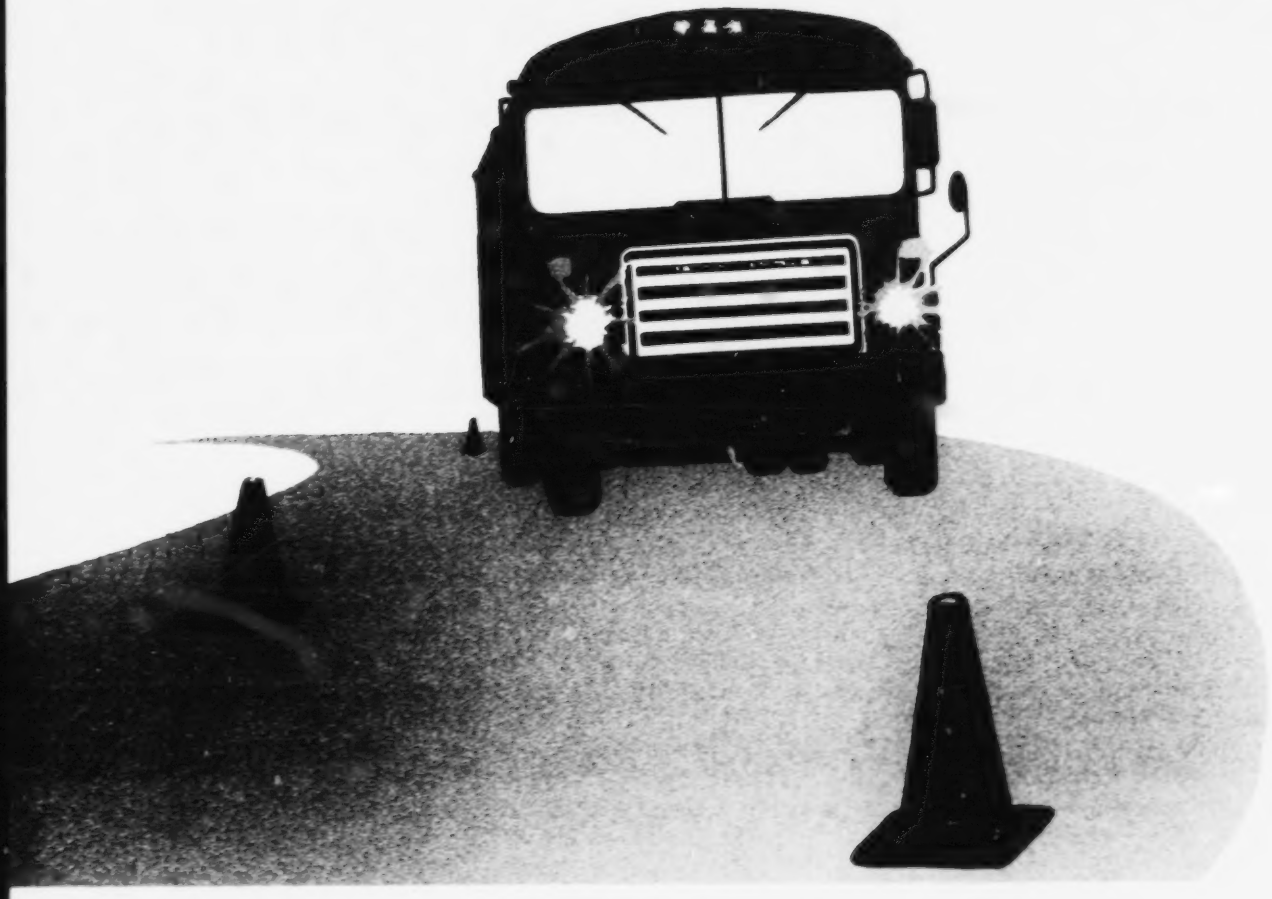
IV. Summary

Traffic laws consist of statutes designed to deal effectively with speed limits, reckless driving and those aspects of vehicle operation dealing with railway approaches, meeting or overtaking of vehicles and the necessity for yielding right-of-ways. Traffic signs, signals and road markings, on the other hand, differ in that they are concerned primarily with the regulatory warning and guide classifications of roadway usage. They vary in shape, size color and legend. Signals, to an even greater degree, are designed to regulate the types of roadway usage characterizing vehicular traffic patterns within a multitude of geographical areas.

V. Session Evaluators

(check the correct response)

1. Traffic laws are essential to pupil safety. ___ yes ___ no
2. Traffic laws control traffic in school zones. ___ yes ___ no
3. Warning signs and regulatory signs are the same. ___ yes ___ no
4. The rectangle is used on all stop signs. ___ yes ___ no
5. "Vertical" and "horizontal" rectangular signs mean different things. ___ yes ___ no
6. The yield sign is always triangular in shape. ___ yes ___ no
7. The rectangle, triangle and octagon shaped signs are used to identify regulatory signs. ___ yes ___ no
8. The diamond, the circle and the crossbuck are used on warning signs. ___ yes ___ no
9. Highway signs are identified by a unique coloring system. ___ yes ___ no
10. Regulatory signs contain black lettered legends on yellow background. ___ yes ___ no
11. Warning signs have black legends on yellow backgrounds. ___ yes ___ no
12. Pedestrian traffic signals are located at all major traffic intersections. ___ yes ___ no
13. All highway traffic signals are pre-timed. ___ yes ___ no
14. The wig-wag arm is a railroad traffic control device. ___ yes ___ no
15. Yellow flashing beacons are traffic warning signals. ___ yes ___ no



UNIT 7: DRIVING SKILLS

UNIT VII
DRIVING SKILLS

I. Introduction

Driving skill is essential to the safe operation of pupil transportation equipment. This unit is designed to upgrade the quality of driver performance by focusing attention upon a variety of safe driving practices that characterize the school bus operation. Both experienced and inexperienced drivers should find the content helpful.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. What weather conditions necessitate an observance of different driving procedures?
2. What are the most likely results associated with excessive engine strain?
3. Why should speed be increased SLIGHTLY on curves?
4. Why is it necessary to keep two bus lengths behind vehicles for each 10 miles per hour of speed?
5. What is the purpose of observing a warm-up period before moving the school bus?

III. Instructional Procedure

Safe driving practices must be introduced to the bus driver in the broadest possible sense. The training instructor must assume that all drivers are in need of both basic and advanced training in all aspects of vehicle operation. Equipment inspection and vehicle operation are the major emphasis areas in the unit and must be covered in detail.

Pre-Trip Inspection

A complete inspection of all safety devices, instrument gauges and equipment componetry must be completed before the vehicle is placed in motion. This means that broken lens and defective bulbs must be replaced; brakes must be inspected for proper pedal and the master cylinder must be checked for possible fluid loss; tires must be checked for cuts, tread separations, flats and breaks in the side walls; the water level in the radiator and the oil level in the crankcase must be checked and special attention should be given to first-aid equipment. The brake and tail lights must be examined, lens on turn signals and overhead warning lights must be cleaned and all mirrors must be checked and properly positioned before the trip begins.

Operational Procedures

The driver must understand how to operate all the equipment on his bus. This will involve clutching, braking, shifting and steering. Clutching, thanks to the syncro-mesh transmission, is greatly simplified for those operating manual transmissions. It is still necessary to use the clutch with such transmissions but the old practice of double clutching is a thing of the past. Today's driver is able to escape the gear clashing that characterized the operation of yesteryear's non-syncro-mesh transmission vehicles. His task is easier, acceleration is more readily achieved and vehicle operation is greatly improved.

Braking is another matter. The experienced driver, however, should not experience difficulty in stopping his vehicle as long as he maintains his brakes in a satisfactory condition. Some, unfortunately, neglect this aspect of vehicle operation and discover the defect after it's too late to avoid the impending accident. While training instructors have done a commendable job in getting drivers to brake their buses on a ***gradual*** rather than a ***sudden*** basis, they have yet to successfully stress the importance of pre-trip inspections as a preventive maintenance procedure.

Shifting has been greatly simplified by the introduction of the syncro-mesh transmission and eliminated altogether with the use of the automatic transmission. Training instructors, however, still experience the usual amount of difficulty in getting new drivers to go through the shift sequence without taking their eyes off the road. (This, of course, is not a problem for those operating buses with automatic transmissions.)

Perfection comes with hours and hours of practice. The driver must learn the shift sequence; he must discover the engine's power range; he must learn when to shift to avoid engine strain and, more importantly, refrain from the tendency to skip gears during the shifting cycle.

Steering involves considerably more than just guiding the school bus in a forward or backward direction. It requires an exercise of judgement in speed, distance and direction. The flow of traffic, the speed to travel and the frequency of turns require speed-related judgements; the type of roadway, the condition of such roadways and the frequency of stops are examples of direction-oriented judgements and the tendency to follow too closely, to make turns without adequate clearance, and to switch lanes without signaling correctly are, obviously, distance-oriented judgements.

Training instructors acknowledge the difficulty of teaching beginning drivers to execute the turn successfully. Teaching such precautionary measures as determining the adequacy of turning space, the absence or presence of approaching traffic, the necessity for gearing down to a safer speed, the need to position before making the turn and taking advantage of posted signs are, admittedly, among the more difficult.

Steering also figures prominently in the passing of other vehicles, parking in limited spaces, backing maneuvers and stopping the vehicle. Training instructors are careful to stress the length of the school bus, the distance required to pass successfully, the use of exterior mirrors and position of the yellow line when it is to the right of the center line. They emphasize the importance of observing proper parking procedures, the necessity for correct positioning in the various parking patterns and the need to set the parking brake securely before leaving the vehicle.

Backing of school buses is strongly discouraged even though such is necessary under certain conditions. The instructor must stress the importance of adult supervision when buses must be backed on school grounds. He must also be cautioned to back onto the side road rather than to back from the side road onto the main roadway when backing is related to turn-a-rounds. Stopping, of course, must be as smooth and as effortless as possible in order to reduce the possibility of accidents and to minimize the wear and tear on braking system componetry.

All operational procedures require an observance of standard safety practices. The movement of vehicles on rough and muddy roads, for example, must be effected with considerable caution. Vehicles operated on such roadways must be driven slowly to protect such essential chassis componetry as shocks, springs and tie rod ends. They must be down shifted as needed to prevent excessive strain on the engine and unnecessary abuse of sensitive transmissions. The tendency to ride the clutch and spin the wheels are equally as serious and must also be avoided.

The instructor must emphasize the actions to be taken during the winter months when roads are at their worst. Wet, slippery pavements require extra caution. Reductions in speed are necessary to minimize the possibility of skids; soft shoulders are also extremely hazardous and bridges must be approached and crossed with the greatest care. The engine is, understandably, subjected to considerable abuse during the bitter winter months. Oils tend to thicken and lubrication of critical moving parts is often neglected by drivers in too much of a hurry to observe an adequate engine warm-up period. The engine, therefore, should be started and operated at fast idle until the pre-trip inspection has been completed. This will not only result in a better protected engine; it will expedite the defogging of the windshield area and afford the driver with greater visibility as he begins his school bus route.

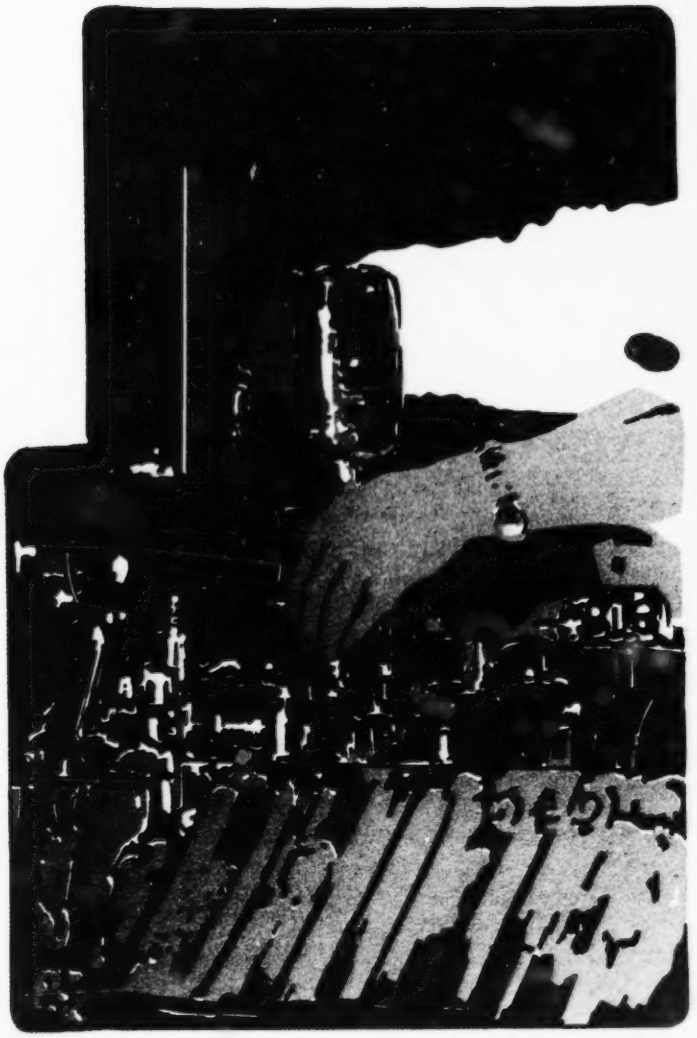
IV. Summary

Equipment operation offers a challenge to both experienced and inexperienced drivers. A successful observance of accepted safety practices is essential to both pupil safety and operational economy. Pupil safety, therefore, will require drivers to possess knowledge of the major aspects of vehicle operation and to exercise caution and other forms of judgment in the operation of equipment on a continual basis. ***When*** to turn and ***where*** to turn, for example, are inseparable aspects of vehicle operation and must be observed to the fullest extent in every detail of program service.

V. Session Evaluators

(check the correct response)

1. The pre-trip inspection is limited to chassis items. ___ yes ___ no
2. Clutching is only one of many operational actions required of bus drivers. ___ yes ___ no
3. Double clutching is unnecessary on synchro-mesh transmissions. ___ yes ___ no
4. The pre-trip inspection is a preventive maintenance measure. ___ yes ___ no
5. Proper shifting avoids engine strain. ___ yes ___ no
6. Steering involves nothing more than guiding the bus. ___ yes ___ no
7. Allowances for the volume of traffic must be made before turns are attempted. ___ yes ___ no
8. Backing buses on school premises is never permitted. ___ yes ___ no
9. Turn-a-rounds are made correctly by backing onto side roads. ___ yes ___ no
10. An adequate warm-up period for buses is required during winter months. ___ yes ___ no



UNIT 8: SCHOOL BUS MAINTENANCE

UNIT VIII
SCHOOL BUS MAINTENANCE

I. Introduction

The school bus driver is responsible for the mechanical condition of his vehicle. Proper attention to minor equipment deficiencies can oftentimes eliminate the necessity for major repairs. Many drivers, however, possess little knowledge of equipment componetry and, therefore, are unable to provide this needed attention. This unit is designed to provide such drivers with information vital to (1) the conservation of equipment, (2) the early detection of equipment malfunctions, and (3) the completion of emergency roadside repairs.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. How can reduced speed increase tire mileage?
2. Why rotate wheels at 5,000 mile intervals?
3. What role does porcelain play in the firing sequence of spark plugs?
4. Relate bus cleanliness to the development of desirable living habits.
5. What danger exists from a bursted muffler?

III. Instructional Procedure

The instructor must be prepared to stress the importance of the bus driver's role in school bus maintenance. He must teach drivers to abide by acceptable conservation practices, to detect mechanical deficiencies, to perform minor emergency roadside repairs and to emphasize the health-related advantages of a clean bus interior.

Conservation Procedures

The proper care of expensive tires is a must for drivers in all school districts. This will require the elimination of unnecessary travel and the operation of buses within posted speed limits. It will also require drivers to keep tires properly inflated and to be on the alert for foreign objects on the road that are likely to damage the interior walls. Pot holes, for example, are extremely damaging to tires and the vehicle's front end suspension assembly. Wheels out of alignment, tires improperly balanced and sudden stops and starts will severely reduce the length of tread life and result in an earlier replacement than would otherwise be necessary.

Abuse of the engine is equally as expensive. The driver must be taught that proper oil and water levels are essential to good engine performance. He must be informed that lugging the engine is both costly and unnecessary and that a properly tuned engine is a relatively inexpensive engine to operate when compared to the one that has been neglected.

Detecting Mechanical Deficiencies

Many equipment deficiencies can be detected by drivers with minimal effort. Most external noises, for example, are located in the engine compartment or in the vicinity of the rear end. Loose or broken belts, deteriorated exhaust manifold gaskets, engine back fires, intermittent squeals, excessive vibrations, high speed shimmy, embedded stones in rear tires, a roar in the differential, tread separations, broken shock hangers, loose or missing exhaust system supports and constant tapping sounds are typical noises that drivers should report to mechanics in the repair facility.

Internal noises are easier to detect. Broken seat cushion clamps, deficient anchorage mounts, loose ceiling panels, broken window stops, unsecured tools in the storage compartment, loose seat frames and loose side mounts are quite common in those buses that are operated on poorly maintained rural roadways. Some drivers cannot make such repairs but promptly reporting them will insure immediate corrective action. Most, however, can repair them successfully.

The instructor should devote some time to "trouble shooting" by drivers. Some drivers will be more capable of performing roadside repairs than others but all should benefit immensely from exposure to such instruction. What driver, for example, is incapable of examining the water level in the battery, tightening cable connections or cleaning corroded terminal posts when the engine fails to start? They, of course, may be able to perform such functions and still lack the skill to complete the route without other mechanical assistance.

Most bus drivers will definitely be unable to repair malfunctioning fuel pumps, leaks in fuel lines, cracks in the distributor cap and faulty carburetors. They may expedite the repair procedure, however, if they have the ability to detect the cause of the problem. Knowledge of a defect in the coil, the presence of excessive carbon accumulations on plugs, moisture in the distributor cap and broken fan or alternator belts would be most helpful to the shop repairman on his way to the scene.

Cleaning the Bus Interior

A clean, sanitary bus provides the greatest deterrent to the spread of germs among transported pupils. Cleanliness, therefore, is essential to the development of desirable living habits among those in a transit status. The driver, in order to maintain a clean interior, must enforce anti-littering regulations on his bus. Eating must not be permitted. He must, in order to re-inforce the necessity for such restrictions, clean his bus on a regularly scheduled basis. The floor must be cleaned, seats must be dusted and objects left on the bus must be removed at the conclusion of each school day. More thorough cleanings of doors, windows, instrument panels and floors are required on a weekly basis.

Responsibility for the Pre-Trip Inspection

The driver with the best chance to complete his route without experiencing a mechanical failure is the driver that will take the time to conduct a pre-trip inspection before he begins it. The inspection of outside equipment will include a check under the hood for proper oil level, a full radiator, good tension on belts, the possibility of loose wires and a strong odor of fuel. He will also check for evidence of overnight vandalism. Tires and wheels will be inspected for flats, cuts and possible tread separations and loose lug bolts. The emergency door will be checked for easy opening and closing. The lights will be cleaned and operated for possible electrical malfunctions; the bus will be examined from underneath for oil leaks, missing body clamps, exhaust leaks and broken springs. The outside inspection will be concluded with a cleaning and positioning of all installed mirrors.

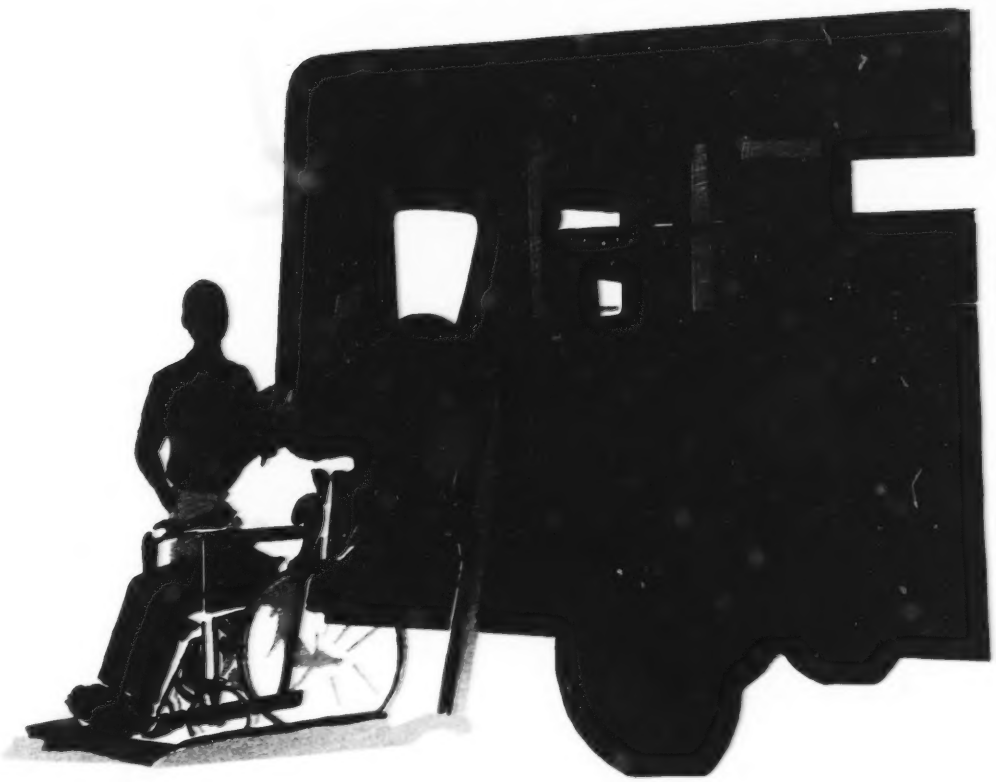
The inside inspection of equipment will concentrate on a careful check of the holding power of both foot and parking brakes, the condition of emergency equipment, the accuracy of dashboard gauges, excessive play in the steering wheel and any unusual slipping or chattering in the clutch.

IV. Summary

Proper maintenance is essential to efficiency in equipment performance. While preventive maintenance is generally performed from the confines of a central repair facility, many repairs of a minor nature can be made by drivers on the route. This reduces the "down time" on equipment and the possibility of major equipment repairs at a later date. It does not, however, supplant the necessity for regularly scheduled preventive maintenance service which must be provided at specified intervals.

V. Session Evaluators

1. The bus driver has an important role in school bus maintenance. ___ yes ___ no
2. The care of tires is a preventive maintenance requirement. ___ yes ___ no
3. Engine abuse results in costly repairs. ___ yes ___ no
4. External noises are especially difficult for inexperienced drivers to identify. ___ yes ___ no
5. Few drivers would profit from instruction in "trouble shooting." ___ yes ___ no
6. A clean bus is essential to good health. ___ yes ___ no
7. Malfunctioning fuel pumps can be repaired enroute by most drivers. ___ yes ___ no
8. The pre-trip inspection does not include equipment under the hood. ___ yes ___ no
9. The bus should be swept and otherwise cleaned each day. ___ yes ___ no
10. Eating is acceptable on buses if it does not result in littering. ___ yes ___ no



UNIT 9: TRANSPORTING THE HANDICAPPED

UNIT IX
TRANSPORTING THE HANDICAPPED CHILD

I. Introduction

Educating the handicapped has been a concern of educators for many years. This concern is responsible for a variety of changes in the educational concepts that evolved from the efforts of school administrators to meet the needs of these children in a more satisfactory manner. Special school centers, staffed with properly trained teachers, for example, met the academic needs of these pupils on an acceptable basis for many years but the social ostracism associated with such centers negated much of their academic achievements; consequently, the search continued for newer and better methods of meeting their growing needs.

The current trend of thinking is reflected in the passage of the mandatory Education of the Handicapped Act which provides that handicapped children, to the ***maximum extent practicable***, shall be educated along with children who do not have handicaps and attend regular classes in facilities previously reserved for the non-handicapped child. This also involves the elimination of special transportation equipment as a "class of vehicles" except that such may be used in those instances where handicapped children cannot be transported satisfactorily in regular school buses to assigned attendance centers. In all instances, the emphasis is away from "separate" and more toward the integration of all children in a "general" type school program.

This unit discusses school board policies relative to the transportation of these children, orientation needs associated with responsibilities of parents, teachers, children and bus drivers, and some of the more common affiliations of these children.

II. Pre-Session Stimulators

1. What is meant by the "bodily" needs of handicapped pupils?
2. How does the emotionally disturbed child differ from the physically handicapped child?
3. Why are seat belts required for non-ambulatory pupils?
4. What is meant by a "seizure?"
5. Why are program evaluations essential to improvements in program service?

III. Instructional Procedure

Transportation for handicapped children should be provided in accordance with officially adopted school board policies. The policies should be comprehensive enough to meet the needs of children with such conditions and flexible enough to be supplemented with other policies when the need for such changes arise. The number of children requiring special transportation service, the maximum size and weight of non-ambulatory children, the type and extent of their handicaps and the location of individual residences are factors that figure prominently in policy development procedures. Policies adopted without such detailed data are not likely to be of much value to school officials.

The board must take other factors of importance into consideration. Eligibility for transportation, for example, must be addressed. Many handicapped children will require more than regular transportation; they will require transportation on specially equipped vehicles. This means that wheel chair locks and power lifts must be provided. Aides, in many cases, must be employed and appropriate child control procedures must be adopted and uniformly enforced.

Responsibilities of Program Participants

Drivers, parents, teachers and children are expected to assume various responsibilities when the school district decides to initiate transportation service for its children with handicapping conditions. Drivers, for example, must be reminded at frequent intervals to become familiar with the physical condition of their pupil loads, the appropriate actions to take when emergencies occur, the most direct approach to the nearest medical facility and the proper steps to take when child control actions become necessary.

Parental responsibilities are somewhat different. Parents are expected to assume responsibility for feeding, clothing and seeing to the bodily needs of their child ***before*** the bus arrives. They must have the child ready to board the bus ***when*** it arrives in the morning and be available during the day if they are needed at school or if the child becomes ill and must be transported home. They must cooperate with school officials and other program personnel.

Teacher responsibilities must be clearly defined and discharged in a professional manner. It is extremely important that they initiate and maintain a regular dialogue with the driver and his aide relative to the child's handicap. They must also maintain close contact with the parents and assist them in meeting the adjustment needs of their children. They must prepare their children for the afternoon return trip home and communicate regularly about the child's progress with its parents.

Child-related responsibilities entail an acceptance of responsibility to the maximum extent possible and compliance with all established behavorial policies. The extent of such responsibilities are obviously dictated by the child's handicapping condition and his capacity to respond to instructions. Disciplinary action must be administered on a level that is consistent with board policy and with the full knowledge and concurrence of both teachers and parents.

Types of Handicapping Conditions

Children are afflicted with many recognizable types of conditions. The major types are identified as the deaf and deaf mute, the blind, the physically handicapped and the emotionally disturbed. These, of course, are not all of the recognizable types but they are among the more difficult to deal with and certainly the most frequently encountered. (Hemophiliacs and epileptics are also transported and require specialized treatment when attacks and injuries occur. Training instructors must not ignore the likelihood of their presence on pupil transportation equipment.)

Characteristics of Each Handicapping Condition

Each requires special care but the nature of the handicap varies. Deaf children, for example, are significantly different from deaf mutes. They may be totally or partially deaf and, as such, are able to speak but with great difficulty. The deaf mute can neither speak nor hear and must rely upon sign language and/or lip reading for communicative purposes. They are inclined to be quite emotional, very intelligent on the average and extremely active.

Blind children, like deaf children, may be totally or partially handicapped. Drivers must be taught to become observant of their condition and watchful over their actions. Assistance must be provided when it is needed.

Physically handicapped children are generally classified as ambulatory or non-ambulatory. Those with the ability to walk with, or without, the use of crutches and/or artificial limbs are referred to as ambulatory children; those that are confined to wheel chairs and require the use of seat belts or other type restraining devices are non-ambulatory. Loading and unloading procedures for these children will necessitate parental, aide or teacher assistance for the driver because of the weight of many of these children.

The emotionally disturbed child is often the most difficult to transport. He is openly and sometimes aggressively affectionate. He is frequently difficult to control; his ability and interest span varies greatly and close supervision is often required.

IV. Summary

Transportation service for the handicapped child presents a challenging and rewarding experience for the school bus driver. The special care required in the loading and unloading of such children creates an awareness of their needs that results in the development of favorable attitudinal changes by those privileged to spend time with them on a day-to-day basis.

The most satisfactory programs are operated under local board developed policies. Policies are influenced by an observance of responsibility classifications, types of handicaps and characteristics that are related to each. Cooperation between drivers, parents, teachers and pupils is essential to the success of the overall effort.

V. Session Evaluators

(select the correct response)

1. The need for policy development is present in all school districts. ___ yes ___ no
2. Special transportation is different from regular transportation. ___ yes ___ no
3. Parents have some responsibility for the success of the pupil transportation effort. ___ yes ___ no
4. Knowledge of the most direct route to a medical facility is an important responsibility of the bus driver. ___ yes ___ no
5. The handicapped child is expected to comply with all reasonable policies. ___ yes ___ no
6. The classroom teacher must prepare the handicapped child for the evening home. ___ yes ___ no
7. The deaf mute is not a physically handicapped child. ___ yes ___ no
8. A hemophiliac child is characterized as a "free bleeder." ___ yes ___ no
9. Ambulatory children are usually confined to wheel chairs because of their handicap. ___ yes ___ no
10. The behavior of an emotionally disturbed child is usually more unpredictable than that of a physically handicapped child. ___ yes ___ no

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Driver improvement practices are frequently limited by nothing more than the ingenuity of the driver training instructor, the supervisor and their relationship with the board of education. The instructor is sometimes opposed by certain members of the board when he attempts to incorporate innovative materials into his program of instruction. He is informed that funds are not available to provide them, that such materials are not needed and that he must learn to get by with less.

The instructor has other ideas. He introduces data revealing an improved accident record, reduced insurance premiums, improved driver morale and testimonials confirming greater community support for the program effort. He, in turn, is supported by the transportation supervisor who does not hesitate to inform the school board that such curriculum changes are needed. The ***good*** drivers, needless to say, welcome their efforts; the ***better*** drivers demand it. Fortunately, all, including the now silenced board members, stand to profit from the experience.

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